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POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

the last decades. His works have become classic and are being published in cheap popular editions already during his life-time. Verner von Heidenstam and Gustaf Fröding, the two who wrought their intuitive philosophy of life into poetry of wondrous strength and beauty, and who incarnated the national character of their people in song and prose, stand foremost as representatives of the idealistic school of writers in Sweden.

Almost all of Heidenstam's works have been translated into German, and several of them successfully into English.

Svea Bernhard

REVIEWS

YOUTH AT WAR

Poems, by Alan Seeger, with an introduction by William Archer. Charles Scribner's Sons.

This volume is almost the work of two authors; for the hand that penned *Juvenilia* was a very different hand from that which gave us *Last Poems*. If Alan Seeger had not fallen at the front, would the former collection have met with the consideration now accorded it? Could we, for instance, knowing nothing of the story of its author, give it the same heed that we give it now, when the glamor of a brave and chivalrous death is upon it? I think that this poet would be the first to ask that it be given the unbiassed judgment granted to the work of writers of less romantic career.

Youth at War

Juvenilia, well named, breathes youth in every stanza; youth in love with life, in love with love, color, sound, romance, pleasure; the virile but untried youth that existed before the war. Had Alan Seeger not gone to the front, had he succeeded in finding a publisher for his work when he took it to London in the summer of 1914, I think that his place as a poet would have been no higher than that of many others writing to-day. Many of these poems, although sincere, are over long, full of the literary manner of a past hour, not free from the influence of various masters. *The Deserted Garden* is rich with color, fragrance, imagery, and bears evidence of the poet's long sojourn in Mexico. *La Nue* is the embodiment of the *idée fixe* through which adolescence views the world at large. In treatment it suggests Gautier's *Contralto*. It contains beautiful lines—these, for example:

I watched thy white feet moving in the mire,
And thy white forehead hid among the stars.

Paris is the Paris soft with pleasure, keen in the search of the senses for beauty and love, and it sings one word—desire. In many of the poems he takes off his gloves quite frankly—another sign of youth! The *Juvenilia* throughout throb with the impetuosity of passion, joy, love, life, and may be characterized by this closing of *An Ode to Antares*:

At Earth's great market where Joy is trafficked in,
Buy while thy purse yet swells with golden youth!

In *Last Poems* we find the second author, the author emerged from his baptism by fire. The seeker whose every fibre of exuberant health ached for adventure has come at

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last to its very heart. Yet here we have no morbid dwelling on the atrocities of war which other and less restrained imaginations have brought to poetry, but the manly singing of one who knows his battlefield. Stern they come to us, these poems, divested of rhetorical trappings, consistent, with one exception, in simple dignity and beauty. *The Aisne* (1914-15) rings vitally. The now famous *I Have a Rendezvous with Death* sings itself over with more and more of appeal. The sonnets here, while a few are of indifferent value, far surpass those in *Juvenilia*, the two entitled *Bellinglise* being the best. *A Message to America* is a childish mixture of glorification and vituperation, more journalistic than poetical, and is the one flaw in this otherwise noble collection. The *Ode in Memory of the American Volunteers Fallen for France* (to have been read before the statue of Lafayette and Washington in Paris, on Decoration Day, May 30, 1916) is so fine a thing that I wish I might quote the whole of it. Since my praise would be necessarily more or less a repetition of William Archer's words, I will make him my spokesman:

Completed in two days, during which he was engaged in the hardest sort of labor in the trenches, this *Ode* is certainly the crown of the poet's achievement. It is entirely admirable, entirely adequate to the historic occasion. If the war has produced a nobler utterance, it has not come my way.

In this *Ode*, as Mr. Archer points out, Seeger wrote his own epitaph:

Now heaven be thanked, we gave a few brave drops;
Now heaven be thanked, a few brave drops were ours.

Youth at War

Through all of these poems runs the poet's blind acceptance of the war idea. To say that war produces nobility is one thing, to say that it is in itself noble is to show misapprehension of principles greater than human strength alone. And when poets come to emphasize this in their work a higher ideal of honor will stimulate mankind. Here again Mr. Archer has voiced so exactly the feelings I have had in reading all of these war poems that again I must quote from his understandingly beautiful introduction:

Some of us may hope and believe that, in after years, when he was at leisure to view history in perspective and carry his psychology a little deeper, he would have allowed, if not more potency, at any rate more adaptability, to the human will. In order to do so, it would not have been necessary to abandon his fatalistic creed. He would have seen, perhaps, that even if we only will what we have to will, the factors which shape the will—of the individual, the nation, or the race—are always changing, and that it is not only possible but probable that the factors which make for peace may one day gain the upper hand of those which, for perfectly definite and tangible reasons, have hitherto made for war.

A. F.

A FLOCK FROM OXFORD

Wheels, An Anthology of Verse. Blackwell, Oxford; Longmans, Green & Co., New York.

This book presents itself in a pleasingly satiric cover, bright yellow, displaying a scraggy nursemaid and a make-shift perambulator. It is the proper sort of ink-pot to hurl itself in the face of senile pomposity. Here, however, the gaiety ends and the contents of the book have none of the lightness of Miss Sitwell's earlier couplet: